

1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2 EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
3 ALEXANDRIA DIVISION

4 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

5 VS.)

1:12-CR-159 JCC

6 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA)
7 SEPTEMBER 14, 2012)

8 JUSTIN DEONTA STROM)
9 _____)

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14 TRANSCRIPT OF SENTENCING
15 BEFORE THE HONORABLE JAMES C. CACHERIS
16 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
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24 Proceedings reported by stenotype, transcript produced by
25 Julie Goodwin.

A P P E A R A N C E S

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1 (SEPTEMBER 14, 2012, 10:43 A.M., OPEN COURT.)

2 THE COURT: I'll take Mr. Strom's case now. The
3 matter comes on for sentencing.

4 MR. BIRNBAUM: Good morning, Your Honor. Marc
5 Birnbaum and Inayat Delawala for the United States.

6 THE COURT: Good morning.

7 MR. CARTER: Good morning, Judge Cacheris. Thomas
8 Carter on behalf of --

9 THE COURT: Good morning, Mr. Carter.

10 MR. CARTER: -- Mr. Strom.

11 THE COURT: I'll have Mr. Strom sworn at this time.

12 (THE OATH WAS ADMINISTERED.)

13 THE COURT: Mr. Strom, have you had a chance to read
14 your presentence report?

15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. Yes.

16 THE COURT: Have you gone over it with Mr. Carter?

17 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.

18 THE COURT: Do you feel the report is accurate
19 concerning your personal background?

20 THE DEFENDANT: Can you say that again?

21 THE COURT: Do you feel the report is accurate
22 concerning your personal background: Prior record, family,
23 age, those kind of things, work history?

24 THE DEFENDANT: For the most part.

25 THE COURT: Okay. What's the part that's not

1 accurate?

2 THE DEFENDANT: Some things about my work --

3 THE COURT: Can you speak up a little, please, sir?

4 THE DEFENDANT: Some things about my work history.

5 THE COURT: Okay. You want to tell me, is there any
6 corrections you want to make?

7 THE DEFENDANT: There's no corrections I want to make.

8 THE COURT: Okay. They don't affect your guideline
9 range anyway, and I'll note that.

10 Do you feel the report is accurate concerning your
11 offense conduct?

12 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: Okay. Do you want to make any additions,
14 corrections, or comments to the report?

15 THE DEFENDANT: No.

16 THE COURT: You may have a seat.

17 Mr. Carter, any objections to the report?

18 MR. CARTER: No. We think it's accurate in all
19 respects, Judge.

20 THE COURT: Mr. Birnbaum, any objections?

21 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, just one note. On page 43,
22 the Government believes the restitution obligation is
23 91,925.94.

24 THE COURT: Now, wait a minute. Let me get to that.

25 Page?

1 MR. BIRNBAUM: Page 43, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: Okay.

3 MR. BIRNBAUM: The Government believes it's 91,925.94.

4 THE COURT: 91,000?

5 MR. BIRNBAUM: I'm sorry. 91,925.94, that the
6 number --

7 THE COURT: Okay. It has 90,000, so it's correct to
8 say --

9 MR. BIRNBAUM: Correct.

10 THE COURT: -- 91,000?

11 Do you have --

12 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, there's an agreed
13 restitution order.

14 THE COURT: Okay. Has that been signed by Mr. Carter?

15 MR. CARTER: Yes.

16 THE COURT: Okay. The restitution, then -- and that's
17 going to be the total restitution?

18 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, the Government continues to
19 receive additional information from victims.

20 THE COURT: Okay.

21 MR. BIRNBAUM: And the Government will forward that
22 information and move the Court for additional restitution as
23 appropriate.

24 THE COURT: Very well.

25 Mr. Carter.

1 MR. CARTER: Good morning, Judge Cacheris.

2 Judge, Justin Strom is prepared to be sentenced
3 this morning. He is hopeful, Judge, that you will see fit to
4 sentence him to a term of years rather than to life in prison.

5 THE COURT: He's at a 43, V, which scores out at life,
6 yeah.

7 MR. CARTER: It does. He recognizes his guidelines
8 range number, but he asks you to impose a sentence of a term of
9 years instead.

10 Judge, he can face a sentence of most any length so
11 long as he has some hope of someday getting home.

12 His co-defendants have received sentences between
13 120 and 216 months. Our position is that he should receive a
14 sentence no longer than any of them.

15 Judge, he disputes the contention that he is more
16 culpable than Messrs. Dove, Sylvia, Jefferies, and Ghile. They
17 were all in this together, Judge. Their roles, as I pointed
18 out in my memorandum, were largely interchangeable. What
19 distinguishes him from them, I submit, is that those gentlemen
20 were smart enough to promptly recognize their plight, to accept
21 responsibility for their conduct, to plead guilty, and to
22 assist the United States.

23 Mr. Strom, on the other hand, was -- was very slow
24 coming to grips with his situation. When he finally recognized
25 his criminality and the position in which he found himself, it

1 was too late for him to do any real sort of triage. Hence,
2 he's here facing the prospect of a possible life sentence.

3 Judge Cacheris, it's evident to -- should be
4 evident to all of us that he does not fit the profile of some
5 big time pimp. As the presentence report makes clear, he owns
6 nothing of value. He was living in a fore -- upon his arrest,
7 he was living in a foreclosed home. His electricity had been
8 cutoff for nonpayment of the utility bill. He had no car, he
9 had no bank account, he had no fancy clothes, he had no Air
10 Jordans, he had no jewelry, and he had two dollars in his
11 wallet. Judge, he was bumming cigarettes from people.

12 There's no money here. There's no huge profits.
13 He's not that -- not a typical big time pimp.

14 He was instead, Judge, broke and, I submit, living
15 in a squalid house in Lorton in essentially a perpetual fog of
16 alcohol and sex. There's no -- no glamour here, Judge, not for
17 Justin Strom and not for the young women.

18 Judge, Hollywood movies irresponsibly paint a
19 picture of prostitution as somehow benign. And Las Vegas,
20 without apology, markets itself as a place for bad behavior and
21 loose sex with no consequences. A sitting president carried on
22 with an intern and lied about it on national TV.

23 We -- we live in a culture, Judge, where this sort
24 of thing can happen. Strom, he didn't fully appreciate the
25 intrinsic wrongfulness of his conduct. It was deplorable, but

1 it was not an unexpected consequence in today's sort of toxic
2 moral culture. Dove, Sylvia, Jefferies, and Ghile, I'm sure,
3 likewise failed to appreciate the damaging nature of their
4 conduct.

5 Since his arrest six months ago, he's been alcohol
6 and drug free. He's been attending church services. He's been
7 getting and listening to valuable advice and counseling from
8 jail staff. He is very, very sorry for what he did, and he
9 would give anything, he tells me, to get a second chance to
10 prove that he can change, that he can be a better person.

11 I'm asking you not to sentence him to life, to
12 please not sentence him to life. Give him some hope of
13 returning home some day, Judge. He has a loving mother and
14 father, brother, family friends -- they're here today in the
15 courtroom.

16 THE COURT: They're welcome.

17 MR. CARTER: Thank you, Judge.

18 They all hope to see him back home some day. They
19 know it's going to be years from now -- well, decades from now,
20 but they're hoping for it; I'm hoping for it.

21 We hope you'll give him that instead of sending him
22 out full of despair, as a life sentence would. And we would
23 ask that you -- that when you sentence him, you recommend the
24 local FCI, because --

25 THE COURT: I'm sorry. I didn't catch you. You

1 recommend?

2 MR. CARTER: We would ask that you recommend the
3 Bureau of Prisons place him in a local FCI so that family and
4 friends can visit with him.

5 THE COURT: I'll grant your motion as to that,
6 Mr. Carter.

7 MR. CARTER: Judge, thank you.

8 THE COURT: Okay. I'm going to take the victims after
9 Mr. Birnbaum's argument.

10 Okay.

11 MR. BIRNBAUM: Yes, Your Honor.

12 Your Honor, the Government respectfully requests
13 this Court impose a sentence of life imprisonment. This is
14 both the sentence recommended under the sentencing guidelines
15 and the sentencing called for by the 3553(a) factors.

16 Your Honor, the factors -- the conduct in this case
17 quite simply is horrific. For a period of five to six years,
18 this defendant groomed, recruited, and trafficked young girls,
19 selling their bodies in ten or 15 minutes increments. As Your
20 Honor has read in the victim impact letters, and will hear in a
21 few moments, these despicable actions of this defendant will
22 have a great impact for years to come.

23 Your Honor, the sentencing guidelines recommend a
24 life sentence and acknowledgement that this is one of the most
25 serious offenses in the United States Code. As Your Honor

1 noted earlier, the defendant's total offense level is 47. He
2 is quite literally off the charts which end at level 43. That
3 is based on not only the underlying offense, but the
4 defendant's specific conduct, including that he used computers
5 to recruit victims, that he was the leader of the enterprise,
6 the number of victims involved, and that he misrepresented his
7 identity.

8 Your Honor, there's also a life sentence
9 recommended because not only is the defendant's offense level
10 off the charts, but his criminal history category is level V,
11 the second highest level based on a significant criminal
12 history.

13 Your Honor, the 3553(a) factors also call for a
14 life sentence. Your Honor, as has been mentioned in the
15 Government's pleadings, the nature, circumstances, and
16 seriousness of this offense and the need for just punishment in
17 this case is significant.

18 THE COURT: What about his co-defendants' sentences,
19 Mr. Birnbaum?

20 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, the Government submits that
21 some of the sentences imposed on the co-defendants, the
22 Government respectfully disagrees with those sentences. But
23 even if those sentences were appropriate for those defendants,
24 they're not appropriate for this defendant. This defendant was
25 the one who founded the enterprise in 2006. This defendant was

1 the unqualified leader.

2 Your Honor, the defendant submits in his sentencing
3 memorandum that he was not the leader; the defendant's roles
4 were interchangeable. That quite simply is not true. It's
5 inconsistent with the statements of the co-defendants, it's
6 inconsistent with the statements of the victims, it's
7 inconsistent with the findings of the Fairfax County Police
8 Department and the FBI during their investigation, and finally,
9 it's inconsistent with what's been submitted to the Court in
10 the presentence report. The leadership role is assessed only
11 against this defendant by the probation office.

12 Your Honor, this is the defendant, as opposed to
13 the other co-defendants, who was involved throughout the entire
14 existence of the conspiracy from 2006 on. This is the
15 defendant who recruited the victims, and this is the defendant
16 who furthered his will and furthered the success of the
17 enterprise through manipulation and intimidation and force,
18 including chokings, beatings, and rape. That quite simply is
19 not the case with some of the other co-defendants. So while
20 the Government respectfully disagrees with those sentences,
21 Your Honor, the defendant is in a different ballpark. His
22 sentence and the life recommended by the 33 -- 3553(a) factors
23 and the guidelines is appropriate with respect to him.

24 Your Honor, one need only look at the circumstances
25 of this offense to understand his depravity. While other

1 co-defendants drove and walked with the girls and in some cases
2 provided narcotics and condoms and alcohol, Your Honor, the
3 presentence report makes clear this defendant's violence,
4 force, and actions that quite simply are horrific.

5 Your Honor, for example, in 2007 he was the one --
6 not a co-defendant -- this defendant who recruited A.N., a
7 16 year old who he met a year earlier when she was 15, a girl
8 who had run away from her foster home. This defendant took her
9 into Virginia, and once into Washington, D.C., to engage in
10 prostitution, provided her with condoms, Ecstasy, cocaine, and
11 marijuana, and set the price for which her body would be sold.

12 In 2009, this defendant -- not other defendants --
13 Mr. Strom recruited R.A.H., then a 16 year old, to work as a
14 prostitute, and during that summer had her working seven days a
15 week. And when that young woman, R.A.H., told Mr. Strom that
16 she no longer wished to be a prostitute, this defendant choked
17 her, threatened her with additional violence, and then took her
18 into the woods and threatened to leave her there unless she
19 engaged in sex with him and then raped her.

20 Your Honor, this defendant -- not another
21 defendant -- recruited M.W., a 17-year-old high school student
22 whom he was dating to work both as a prostitute and an
23 individual recruiting other girls; and at the defendant's
24 direction, M.W. recruited a 17-year-old J.T., a classmate, and
25 J.E., a 17-year-old inmate at the Fairfax County Juvenile

1 Detention Center.

2 This defendant -- not other defendants -- recruited
3 additional girls online through false Facebook profiles, and
4 one B.B., a 17 year old. She -- this defendant told her that
5 he -- that she had to have sex with him as part of an
6 initiation, then attempted to force her to ingest cocaine, and
7 when she refused, slammed her head against the window, forced
8 her to engage in oral sex at knifepoint, and forced her to have
9 sex with paying customers.

10 These are just a few examples of this defendant's
11 actions. And while the co-defendants' actions are certainly
12 reprehensible, they involved driving and transporting and
13 walking with, not the actions that I've just described to the
14 Court.

15 Your Honor, this defendant, with the exception of
16 perhaps one other defendant, has the most significant prior
17 criminal history. It spans 14 years and includes 11 juvenile
18 convictions; four adult convictions, including assault and
19 battery, carrying a concealed weapon, grand larceny, and
20 contributing to the delinquency of a minor is that last case,
21 Your Honor, that involves the defendant's sexual contact with a
22 15-year-old girl.

23 Your Honor, he also has three probation violations
24 and a failure to appear. And what's notable is that the
25 defendant was sentenced to incarceration for a number of those

1 offenses, and yet upon release, continued to prostitute
2 juvenile --

3 THE COURT: Well, Dove had a criminal history of VI
4 career offender. Is that --

5 MR. BIRNBAUM: Yes.

6 THE COURT: -- correct?

7 MR. BIRNBAUM: Yes, Your Honor. He --

8 THE COURT: And then Sylvia -- let me finish. And
9 Sylvia was a category V?

10 MR. BIRNBAUM: Yes, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: Okay.

12 MR. BIRNBAUM: And with the exception of Dove, he is
13 in that second category down with Mr. Sylvia.

14 Your Honor, what's interesting as well is the
15 defendant appears to embrace the gang lifestyle. Your Honor,
16 he was stabbed at the age of 18 because of his affiliation with
17 UGC, thereafter he joined UGC. He was not dissuaded by
18 violence, but it was something he enjoyed and joined as a
19 member and then subsequently tattooed the words Thug Life over
20 his stab wound on his stomach.

21 Your Honor, the -- we've talked with respect to the
22 co-defendants and their roles in this offense, but a life
23 sentence is also important in this case for general deterrence
24 and to show respect for the law. As the Government has pointed
25 out in the sentencing memorandum at length, judges in this

1 district have consistently imposed significant sentences for
2 juvenile gang sex trafficking, Your Honor, including sentences
3 of 50 years and a life sentence. Of all of those cases, the
4 defendant's actions involve the greatest number of girls and
5 the longest period of time.

6 Your Honor, in his sentencing memo the defendant
7 indicates that he would have done anything to have done things
8 differently. It is the defendant's conscious decision -- it
9 was his conscious decision to commit these acts. This was not
10 one night when he did it, one week when he did it, one month
11 when he did it, but a determination for five or six years to do
12 it, and to victimize young girls, eight juveniles and other
13 young adults in this case.

14 Your Honor, a life sentence, given all of those
15 factors, is fair, just, and necessary. Certainly life
16 sentences are reserved for those most serious offenses, most
17 heinous crimes, and the most dangerous defendants. Your Honor,
18 this is such a case, this is such a defendant, and the
19 Government asks the Court to impose a life sentence.

20 THE COURT: Very well.

21 Let me hear from the victims. And if they come
22 forward, just give me an initial and not your -- not your real
23 name, just --

24 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, if I --

25 THE COURT: -- an initial.

1 MR. BIRNBAUM: -- could as J.E. to come forward,
2 please.

3 THE COURT: Okay.

4 You can come to the podium, Miss.

5 J.E.: Hi.

6 THE COURT: You want to adjust that microphone so we
7 can hear you. Thank you.

8 J.E.: My name is J.E. I'm a 17 year old. I'm
9 addressing the Court because I felt susceptible to Justin's
10 lies. When I was 17, I met one of Justin's recruiters that
11 recruited me from the Juvenile Detention Center. I was
12 recruited because I met the criteria Justin was looking for. I
13 was pretty, naive, and had low self-esteem, and someone
14 seeking --

15 THE COURT: Just go a little bit slower.

16 J.E.: Sorry.

17 THE COURT: Go ahead.

18 J.E.: I use the word paradise because Justin made it
19 seem that prostitution was not wrong, that I had this power
20 amongst others because I could get money and customers.

21 The worst part about being involved with Justin was
22 he only looked out for money and making money and sex. Justin
23 knew I was the type of person, I was self-conscious and wanted
24 to please others so he used this to his advantage.

25 Looking back at it, I know that I was groomed. I

1 was groomed because Justin made it seem like everything is okay
2 and that he wanted me to do what some -- something that
3 everybody should be doing, prostitute.

4 The worst part was that he groomed me to believe
5 that I had to pass a test for -- that included sexual acts in
6 order to associate with him. I felt that -- I felt like I had
7 to fulfill his requirements because I wanted to please him,
8 which he knew.

9 Justin has affected me in so many ways, including
10 not being able to trust others. I feel very guilty and judged
11 by others because I know what I did was wrong. I don't feel
12 safe anymore because my thoughts of what I did makes me
13 depressed. I get upset and scared when I see Hispanic men
14 because those were the ones that Justin would seek out to have
15 sex with me.

16 Now that I am pregnant, Justin's actions have
17 severe consequences on me because sometimes I do get sad and
18 depressed, and I feel fearful that it will impact me with my
19 child. I am seeking help because I don't think I can handle
20 all of these emotions on my own and continue -- and continue to
21 have feelings that I could have stopped it sooner and the
22 possibility that what Justin did will hurt my child.

23 And I just want to say that, you know, just
24 because -- I don't know, it's just wrong.

25 THE COURT: Thank you.

1 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, M.W.'s mother.

2 THE COURT: Okay.

3 Good morning.

4 MOTHER OF M.W.: Good morning, Your Honor.

5 I am the parent of one of the victims. Because my
6 daughter did not have a voice or a choice with Mr. Strom and
7 his associates, I am here today to speak on her behalf as well
8 as mine.

9 I have been a resident of Fairfax County since
10 1984. I had the good fortune to choose this residential area
11 with its low crime and wonderful schools. I was shocked to
12 learn that less than one mile from our house and her school
13 that Mr. Strom was leading a dangerous gang whose sole purpose
14 was to prey on the vulnerability of young girls for purposes of
15 prostitution and self financial gain. Through fear, drugs,
16 lies, and intimidation, he knowingly and without conscience
17 robbed my daughter of her high school graduation, her
18 innocence, and most of all her self-worth.

19 As a direct result of his actions, her physical and
20 mental health can never be restored to their original state,
21 and the extent of the damage is unknown. There is a very real
22 possibility that my daughter could have HIV and other
23 life-threatening diseases due to his total disregard for
24 another human being. She was expendable to him, as were all
25 the other young recruits.

1 His intimidation tactics continued on to my
2 property for the sole purpose of emphasizing to my daughter
3 that there was no safe haven. His evil nature put our entire
4 family through hell on earth that I never want to relive again
5 or have any other family suffer the effects of this trauma.
6 His premeditated behavior is despicable, and I pray he is never
7 given the opportunity to repeat it. If justice is served, then
8 today's sentencing will enable my daughter to safely return
9 home and reclaim her neighborhood, with the assurance that she
10 will never be confronted by him again in her lifetime.

11 What Mr. Strom subjected my daughter and these
12 other young girls to is the most degrading, despicable,
13 inhumane act of depravity any parent can imagine. I pray that
14 the consequences for his actions will equal the trauma of a
15 lifetime that he personally, knowingly, and willingly inflicted
16 on each and every one of his victims.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, M.W.'s father.

19 THE COURT: Okay.

20 Good morning, sir.

21 FATHER OF M.W.: Good morning.

22 Your Honor, I can't add anything else regarding how
23 this affected my family and my daughter, but I would like to
24 say that my daughter, like many of the other victims, was
25 young, attractive, was struggling, but she was doing well in

1 her Fairfax County high school. I would also like to add that
2 she has never been to Las Vegas, and that I'd never heard any
3 of the other co-defendants' names until today, reading things,
4 and that she has a tattoo of J, not any of the other
5 co-defendants, on her body.

6 That's all.

7 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

8 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, R.A.H.

9 Good morning.

10 R.A.H.: I never thought for one second that I would
11 be 20, struggling with self-worth, being a young mom, having
12 addiction problems, no friends and no relationship with the men
13 in my life.

14 I met Justin Strom at 16. I had gone out of school
15 for the summer. I had been playing soccer, had good friends
16 and a good relationship with my parents. I remember the day I
17 met him and how approachable and relaxed he was. He's a con
18 artist, a monster, a manipulator. The same day I met him I
19 found myself, or lost myself, in the arms of thugs and
20 hustlers. They will risk anybody's life to save their own.

21 I was brainwashed into believing that having sex
22 with men for money was normal, an everyday thing. Why have sex
23 for free if you can get money? It all made sense, at the time.

24 The drugs started to take over. I couldn't seem to
25 function without the Coke, Ecstasy, and alcohol. I was living

1 two lives: Go home, sleep, and eat dinner with the family,
2 then go out, get high, and get money. It was insanity. I had
3 become afraid of anything else in life except what I had been
4 doing. I stopped going to school because of how physically and
5 emotionally tired I became. I stopped seeing friends because
6 they somehow just couldn't relate to me, being as dirty as I
7 became.

8 I have been in three rehabs, three hospitals, had a
9 suicide attempt, and outpatient treatments with multiple
10 therapists. And even after all that, I still seem to feel
11 broken, worthless, and unequal to society. I feel like I'm at
12 the bottom.

13 Okay. I feel like I'm at the bottom and I can't
14 get up. I struggle daily to get dressed, showered, and get
15 through another day. When I look at my baby boy, I pray to
16 protect him from the evil Justin brought into my life. He took
17 so much of my life from me. I wish I could go back to the day
18 he approached me, and made the decision to walk away.

19 That's all.

20 THE COURT: Thank you.

21 Any other victims?

22 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, two additional victims.

23 J.T.'s father.

24 THE COURT: Okay.

25 Good morning, sir.

1 FATHER OF J.T.: Good morning.

2 Did you just hear that? That is what we're all
3 going through.

4 All right. I'm here because I want justice.
5 Justice needs to be served, and you're the man to do it. There
6 are guidelines. I'm hoping you follow them.

7 I had something nice written down, but I'm sort of
8 struggling.

9 All right. My daughter is going through a lot, as
10 we all are. You know, it's rather difficult. My marriage is
11 failing; my family is failing. I failed my daughter. I hope
12 you don't fail us.

13 My daughter has been in therapy. She's been in
14 therapy for a long time, about a year, and she's continuing
15 down that path, similar to the young lady who just left. It's
16 amazing, they're identical. And we deal with that.

17 The financial stress is difficult. I've spent over
18 50,000. Indirectly I've lost over \$300,000. All of this
19 because of this gentleman and his little gang of thugs. Right
20 around Fairfax County. We're in Fairfax County for god sakes,
21 a mile away from where I live. It's amazing.

22 There's nothing good that has come out of this.
23 His -- this guy, his gang of thugs running around, recruit
24 women. You've just heard them. The parents are affected, the
25 family's affected, the friends are affected, you're affected.

1 It's insane, to have young women running around
2 doing what they're doing under the direction of him. He's
3 crushed the sanctity of my family, this community, and all of
4 us here today.

5 I have a lot more to say, but -- I mean, I think
6 you get the point. We are here today for justice. There are
7 guidelines that need to be followed. We understand what the
8 guidelines are. We heard what the guidelines are. He's the
9 top of the guidelines.

10 The one person here that could follow those
11 guidelines and give us justice is you. You are the person
12 today we're looking for. You are the reason why we're here.
13 We are here to make sure that you serve justice to him.

14 Thank you.

15 THE COURT: Thank you, sir.

16 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, finally, R.D.H.

17 THE COURT: Good morning.

18 R.D.H.: Good morning, Your Honor.

19 All right. My name is R.D.H., and I was told that
20 I should -- or I was asked to come in and let the Court know
21 the occurrences and the effects of my life during and after my
22 relationship with Justin Strom. Unfortunately, I had been the
23 girlfriend of Strom from April 2009 until July 2009 when I
24 finally left him. Regrettably, I cannot say that the events of
25 that short three months remains dormant in my life.

1 Justin Strom and I met on the Internet on Facebook
2 or MySpace -- I can't remember which -- a few weeks prior to us
3 dating. On the Internet site, Strom came off to me as a nice
4 guy, someone I may like to get to know.

5 After some weeks, we decided to take it to another
6 level and meet in person. When I arrived, Strom met me in
7 front of a leasing office at an apartment complex in Lorton and
8 gave me directions to a riverside rural area off the back road,
9 not far from the apartment.

10 My visits became more frequent and led to me and
11 Strom becoming a couple. Shortly after, I found out I was
12 pregnant with my second child. When I -- when I told my
13 father, he told me that I could no longer live under his roof.
14 He used -- oh, I'm sorry.

15 At that time, Strom had talked to me about wanting
16 to find females willing to have sex for money. He used my
17 e-mail and my MySpace account to send messages to multiple
18 women in attempts to recruit them into this -- into his found
19 business. With my attempts at finding a job failing, I allowed
20 him to use me as a taxicab, transporting him wherever he found
21 a female that was interested and to the spots where he had them
22 walk around to find a trick.

23 While the ladies were running around, he had his
24 cousin drive my car and left me in an area where the ladies
25 were working. At one point at my father's house, with Strom --

1 my father not being home -- Fairfax County police came to my --
2 to the house asking about who may have been driving my car. I
3 told them I was unsure and asked why, and they had told me that
4 my car was reported leaving a conflict between two black males
5 seen leaving in my car and a white male, maybe two. I don't
6 feel either car -- recall.

7 When he wanted to use my car again, without me
8 present, I told him no. With one of the ladies in the back
9 seat with me, Strom's cousin already in the driver's seat, I
10 continued to tell him no. Without warning, Justin Strom had
11 punched me in my left temple area.

12 It took me a few minutes to realize what happened,
13 but when I did realize, Strom was turning around in the
14 passenger's seat, right fist still clinched. My sunglasses
15 were now on my lap, and the girl sitting next to me pointed out
16 that I had a cut on my left temple area from the punch that he
17 had just delivered.

18 At that moment, I jumped out of the car looking for
19 a police officer, anyone that may be able to help. Strom was
20 quick to follow, grabbing my arm, apologized, and told me that
21 he would never do it again. And I believed him, knowing it
22 went against all my better judgment.

23 While with women, and sometimes without, Strom and
24 I stayed in hotels, but occasionally I would take him to the
25 child of his mother, her house in Fairfax, to stay with her.

1 While staying at a hotel, there was a girl whom I
2 found out was underage staying in the room with us. I went to
3 the laundromat across the street to do Strom and my laundry,
4 and when I came back I saw that the girl and Strom had
5 definitely engaged in something I would not have approved of
6 moments before I entered. The girl was in a skirt so it was
7 hard to tell, but I do not -- but I do know that Strom jumped
8 to the opposite bed quickly, pulling his pants up, but they
9 were still undone at the button and zipper. I attempted to
10 find out what happened, when an argument started.

11 Strom always said he had to test the girls to see
12 if they were legitimate by some sort of sexual relations, and I
13 told him that sex was not an option. When the argument started
14 to erupt, Strom told me to come into the bathroom to discuss it
15 with him privately. No sooner than I walked into the bathroom
16 behind him, the door slammed and I was suspended in the air by
17 my throat against the wall. All I remember is being scared out
18 of my mind from that moment on. I was scared of him before,
19 but now this beast of a man had my life in his hands and the
20 look that I saw in his eyes was that he would not hesitate to
21 take it from me at any moment if I did not do what he said
22 and to be a good girl.

23 After that day, another woman was recruited by
24 Strom. And because I was cut off from everyone I knew, I
25 befriended this one. She seemed so much like me, and we got

1 along very well. Strom was very strict about whom I could talk
2 to and was notorious for grabbing my phone and snapping it in
3 half if I talked to someone that he did not approve of. That
4 would probably be a total of five or six phones.

5 In all that, she became the closest thing to a
6 friend that I had. She also turned out to be the most
7 profitable of the women. And Strom would constantly cheat the
8 girls out of their money they had earned by saying it was a
9 charge for hotel rooms, drugs, if the girls wanted any drugs,
10 security, food, gas, et cetera.

11 Our last and final -- our last altercation was in
12 front of this same girl. Strom wanted to go to his baby
13 mother's house, and I took that as an opportunity to leave him
14 for good. So I told him I was tired of taking him over there
15 and that I was tired of being with him and that I would drop
16 him off at the nearest Metro station, and he could ride it to
17 West Falls Church and walk or ride a bus the rest of the way.
18 He argued that I was going to take him straight to her house.
19 When I reached the exit for the Metro station -- I do not
20 recall which one it was, but there should be a police report
21 from that day on Fairfax and Alexandria County.

22 As I took the exit, Strom's fist once again came
23 across my face, this time on the right temple area. My vision
24 went dark for a few seconds, but I was able to slam the brakes
25 and bring the car to a complete stop in the middle of the exit

1 ramp. I yelled at Strom to get out of the car and he did, but
2 he took my keys with him. When he noticed that cars were
3 piling up behind me, he walked back to the car, got in, gave me
4 my keys, and told me to take him to the Metro station.

5 He refused to get out and continued arguing, so I
6 finally just gave up and took him to her house. When I finally
7 got there and he got out of the car, slammed my door, grabbed
8 my phone to make a phone call, and next thing you know my
9 phone's gone. He had grabbed it and broke that one in half as
10 well and threw it hard into my face.

11 I pulled away without a word. When I got far
12 enough away, I pulled to the side and asked the girl to move to
13 the front. I began to cry uncontrollably, hyperventilating and
14 worrying about what my three-month-old fetus might be enduring
15 with all the stress I had been under and with the abuses.

16 Unable to drive, I pulled over while attempting to
17 talk to the dispatch lady on the girl's phone, but was unable
18 to talk. So I handed the phone to her, and she directed them
19 as to where we were. When Fairfax arrived, I told them what
20 happened, where they could find Strom. After three hours of
21 waiting, being hungry and pregnant, and having family and
22 friends at the hospital, I could not wait any longer to be seen
23 by a doctor so I left without treatment.

24 With Strom in jail I thought I would be fine, but
25 days after the arrest, phone calls from the Fairfax ADC started

1 coming in. Strom would be on the phone telling me he knows
2 where my oldest son was living at the time and that I better
3 drop the charges or else.

4 The phone calls were endless. I reported to the
5 Prince William police hoping that I may be able to file a
6 complaint, but was unsuccessful. There may be a police report
7 in Prince William for that as well, but I'm not sure.

8 Come the day that I was to appear in court in
9 Alexandria, the phone calls continued along with messages from
10 him on Facebook -- his account being used by someone else
11 claiming to be him and from his baby mother as well. And so I
12 did end up dropping the charges against him.

13 I finally changed my number and deleted the
14 Facebook page that they had been writing, and did not hear
15 anything further until Detective Wolf and his partner knocked
16 on my door this past spring.

17 During the relationship, Strom not only physically
18 abused me but mentally abused me as well. He would constantly
19 tell me that I was not good enough, that I was ugly, had a
20 moustache, too many freckles, too hairy, not thick enough. You
21 name it, he probably said it. And also if it was not for him,
22 I would be nothing.

23 He was, and still is, a cruel individual, and I
24 believe that he is not meant to be on any streets. I, to this
25 day, fear about my two sons -- mainly my youngest son who is

1 now closing in on three years old in December.

2 When Strom and I first started dating, before I
3 found out the real monster he truly was, I didn't understand
4 why his first two baby mothers did not allow him unsupervised
5 visits with his children. But now after being in a
6 relationship and seeing the monster that he is, I do
7 understand. And I don't want my children anywhere near him.

8 I fear to this day that Strom is the father of my
9 youngest and what may happen if he is the father. I am now
10 visiting a counselor regularly, and I am on a waiting list for
11 further counseling through mental health. And it has been said
12 that I am suffering to this day from depression, anxiety, and
13 yet to be determined anything else I might be suffering now
14 after our relationship.

15 I tried to act like nothing happened, like it
16 didn't affect me, but it did. To this day, I still cannot
17 pass -- drive past Tyson's Corner near the exit for 66 on
18 Route 7 without having some sort of attack. When my children
19 are asleep, so they do not witness their mommy is hurting, I
20 cry just to cry.

21 When I came to the hearing where he made the plea
22 of guilty to the charges he is currently facing, the reason I
23 am writing this letter, he saw me, and the stare in his eyes
24 chilled me to the bone. Strom has nothing in those eyes. No
25 heart, no compassion, and certainly no remorse for what he has

1 done to me and to others. His face that day at court is burned
2 into my head, and I pray that one day it will no longer haunt
3 me.

4 Justin Strom is a coldhearted cruel monster, and he
5 deserves to be in jail and away from anyone else that he will
6 put in harm's way. He could have killed my youngest son,
7 carrying in the womb. He knew I was pregnant, but he did not
8 care and it did not stop him from using me as his personal
9 punching bag. If he is given another chance, which he is
10 well-known in various county court systems, then there is no
11 doubt in my mind that he will continue to live his life the way
12 he has lived it thus far. He has been granted many chances and
13 obviously shows no sign of trying or wanting to change his
14 ways.

15 I am not going to lie to you, Your Honor. I hope
16 you see fit that he gets as much time as you can give him for
17 these crimes. It may not heal me for what I or any of the
18 other ladies have been through with him, but at least I know
19 that my children and I are safe for however many years and
20 maybe even the rest of our lives.

21 I have always felt like I needed to look over my
22 shoulder, worried to go places in fear that I might see him.
23 He has torn me apart, and I do not look at anything in as good
24 of a light as I once did. He took innocence from me that I
25 cannot get back no matter how hard I try. It is gone.

1 Thank you, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: Thank you.

3 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, those are the witnesses.

4 THE COURT: Ask you one other question. Did any of
5 these witnesses testify in the other two, Sylvia and Dove?

6 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, no. The witnesses only
7 addressed the Court in this sentencing.

8 THE COURT: Okay. But they filed letters, I take it?

9 MR. BIRNBAUM: Your Honor, there is one letter in the
10 presentence report that was originally in the presentence
11 report in this case that was contained within the presentence
12 reports in the other cases as well.

13 THE COURT: Okay. The others weren't -- didn't have
14 as many juveniles involved, but anyhow I'll get to that.

15 MR. BIRNBAUM: Yes, sir.

16 THE COURT: Okay.

17 Mr. Strom, anything you want to say by way of
18 mitigation or punishment?

19 THE DEFENDANT: I just -- I just want to say that -- I
20 just want to say that I accept responsibility and that I'm
21 sorry -- I'm sorry for the things that I've done, and I'm sorry
22 for -- for my actions. And I want to say to the families and
23 the victims and to my family that I'm sorry for all the pain
24 that I caused them.

25 And basically at least a month -- a month or so

1 before I was arrested, I -- I woke up and, you know, I was all
2 alone. I didn't have anything -- didn't have any friends,
3 didn't have any family around me. I was by myself. But the
4 friends that I consider my family, one of them, Sylvia, was in
5 jail. Dove and Jefferies, they had went along and started
6 their own thing with the females that were working for them,
7 and Ghile was long gone. And I was all alone, and I was left
8 with nothing. And I looked in the mirror and I could see what
9 I became and -- and that's not what I wanted to be. That's not
10 the type of person I want to be as a role model to my -- my
11 sons. And I decided I wanted to change from then. And from
12 that day forth, I didn't have anything to do with any
13 prostitution or receive any money from it.

14 Then I was -- then I was arrested, and ever
15 since -- ever since I've been incarcerated, you know, it haunts
16 me. And, you know, the -- one of the fathers that was talking
17 and the first -- one of the first witnesses that was talking,
18 you know, brought me to tears because the things I was doing,
19 that was -- I was on drugs.

20 I can't -- I can't blame anybody but myself. And
21 I -- I don't want to blame it on drugs or alcohol, but it had a
22 big part. And I just -- I'm sorry for the pain that I put
23 these people through, and I -- and I deserve to be -- I deserve
24 to be punished for that -- to give me -- give me a second
25 chance to be -- to be a husband to my wife and be a father to

1 my kids because I think they deserve that.

2 I have -- I have more that I wanted to say, but,
3 you know, I don't feel -- I don't feel I can say it, and I
4 don't...

5 I just ask -- I just ask that -- you know, I ask
6 God to forgive me. I ask for mercy. Your Honor, I just ask
7 that you have mercy on me. I accept that.

8 THE COURT: Okay. You just remain there a minute,
9 sir.

10 Let me just note, and I'm going to note that
11 sentences are imposed in accordance with 18 U.S. Code 3553(a).
12 The guideline calculations are just one factor the Court takes
13 into consideration when sentencing. *Kimbrough v. United*
14 *States*, 552 U.S. 85, 2007; *Gall v. United States*, 552 U.S. 38,
15 2007 case.

16 I understand that I'm free to depart upwards or
17 downwards from the guideline range to grant variances as *Gall*
18 permits district courts to impose sentences both above and
19 below the guideline recommendations. See *Gall* at 45. I also
20 understand under *U.S. v. Nelson*, 129 Supreme Court 890, 892, a
21 sentencing court may not presume that a sentence within the
22 applicable Sentencing Guidelines range is presumptively
23 reasonable.

24 The Court is going to commit you to the Bureau of
25 Prisons for 40 years. Upon release from imprisonment, you will

1 serve a five-year supervised release with the following special
2 conditions:

3 One, you shall participate in a program approved by
4 the U.S. Probation Officer for substance abuse, which program
5 may include residential treatment and testing to determine
6 whether you reverted to the use of drugs or alcohol. Partial
7 costs are to be paid by you, all as directed by the probation
8 officer.

9 Secondly, pursuant to the Adam Walsh Child
10 Protection and Safety Act of 2006, the defendant shall register
11 with the state sex offender registration agency and any state
12 where defendant resides, is employed, carries on a vocation, or
13 is a student, according to the federal and state laws as
14 directed by the probation officer.

15 Thirdly, you shall participate in a program
16 approved by the United States Probation Office for mental
17 health treatment. The costs of these programs are to be paid
18 by you as directed by the probation officer.

19 You shall waive all rights of confidentiality
20 regarding mental health treatment in order to allow the release
21 of information to the United States Probation Officer and
22 authorities, to communicate between the probation officer and
23 treatment provider.

24 I will find you're unable to -- ability to pay a
25 fine, cost of imprisonment, and the cost of supervision.

1 A \$100 special assessment is due now. I'll give
2 you credit for time served.

3 At this time, I'll explain the sentence given now:

4 This sentence reflects the nature and
5 circumstances, seriousness of the offense. The defendant pled
6 guilty to sex trafficking of juveniles. The defendant was a
7 leader of the Underground Gangster Crips. Defendant gave
8 victims drugs and alcohol. In 2006, he began prostituting
9 juveniles and adult females to support his lifestyle.
10 Defendant acknowledged prostituting at least eight juvenile
11 females.

12 As a leader of the conspiracy, the defendant
13 employed others to manage the day-to-day operation of his
14 prostitution enterprise. The defendant would generally stay in
15 a vehicle or at home while other members of the conspiracy
16 accompanied prostitutes to collect the profits. Defendant
17 would meet the victims at Metro stops. He also used the
18 Internet to recruit prostitutes. Some of the victims were
19 willing participants. Defendant would ply the victims with
20 drugs and alcohol to keep them in his employ.

21 Additionally, he engaged in acts of violence
22 against some of the juveniles. He engaged in sexual conduct
23 and raped some of the victims. Defendant's conduct's egregious
24 and continued for approximately six years.

25 For example, R.H. wanted to stop. Defendant choked

1 her, threatened her with additional violence, and also raped
2 her.

3 And I've considered the victim impact this morning.
4 And certainly these people have suffered a lot of pain,
5 physical and mental.

6 Second, it reflects the history and characteristics
7 of defendant. Defendant is 27 years old, married, has seven
8 children, has a prior record which results in a criminal
9 history of V. Defendant has expressed remorse for his conduct.

10 The sentence promotes respect for law; provides
11 just punishment for the offense; affords adequate deterrence to
12 criminal conduct; protects the public from further crimes of
13 the defendant; provides the defendant with needed correctional
14 treatment in the most effective manner; and also, this sentence
15 protects the public from further crimes of the defendant.

16 The Court feels that the 40 years is sufficient,
17 but not greater than necessary.

18 Let me note the sentences of the other defendants,
19 because that always has a bearing on the sentence that's just
20 imposed.

21 Defendant Mr. Strom was involved in the conspiracy
22 of 2006 to 2012; longest member; prostituted at least eight
23 juvenile victims; recruited victims through Internet, juvenile
24 detention, and Metro stops; solicited customers through the
25 Internet. He used violence and force to control prostitutes;

1 would ply the victims with drugs, alcohol; set the price for
2 prostitution services; participated in sexual demos with the
3 victims and other members of the gang to participate in the
4 demos. He was a leader of the Underground Gangster Crips;
5 directed the activities of other members of the conspiracy; and
6 he had a criminal history of V.

7 Taking Mr. Donyel Dove, that's D-O-V-E. He got 216
8 months. Involved in the conspiracy of April 2009 to November
9 2011; prostituted two juvenile victims. Served as a bodyguard
10 to the prostitutes and driver; did not recruit prostitutes; did
11 not participate in sexual demos; did not transfer the victims
12 out of state as did Michael Jefferies and Mr. Strom; and no
13 evidence he possessed a weapon during the offense. Criminal
14 history of VI; career offender.

15 Christopher Sylvia got a 120-month sentence.
16 Admitted to the statement of facts of being involved in the
17 conspiracy from November '11 to January '12; other victim
18 accounts, and he participated in 2009.

19 He prostituted three juvenile victims; served as a
20 driver and bodyguard; solicited Spanish-speaking customers; did
21 not recruit victims or prostitutes; did not participate in the
22 sexual demos; no evidence he possessed a weapon or engaged in
23 violence. He got a criminal history of V.

24 I've had to consider those in imposing sentence on
25 you, and also the need to provide restitution to these victims.

1 Accordingly, that's the reasons for the sentence.

2 I remand him to the custody of the Marshal.

3 Mr. Carter, are you court appointed?

4 MR. CARTER: No, sir.

5 THE COURT: Retained? Very well.

6 I remand him to the custody of the Marshal.

7 (PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED AT 11:35 A.M.)

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14 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT)
15 EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA)

16 I, JULIE GOODWIN, Official Court Reporter for the
17 United States District Court, Eastern District of Virginia, do
18 hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from
19 the record of proceedings in the above matter, to the best of
20 my ability.

21 I further certify that I am neither counsel for,
22 related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in
23 which this proceeding was taken, and further that I am not
24 financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the
25 action.

Certified to by me this 19TH day of OCTOBER, 2012.

21

22

23

24

25

/s/
JULIE A. GOODWIN, RPR
Official U.S. Court Reporter
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Alexandria, Virginia 22314